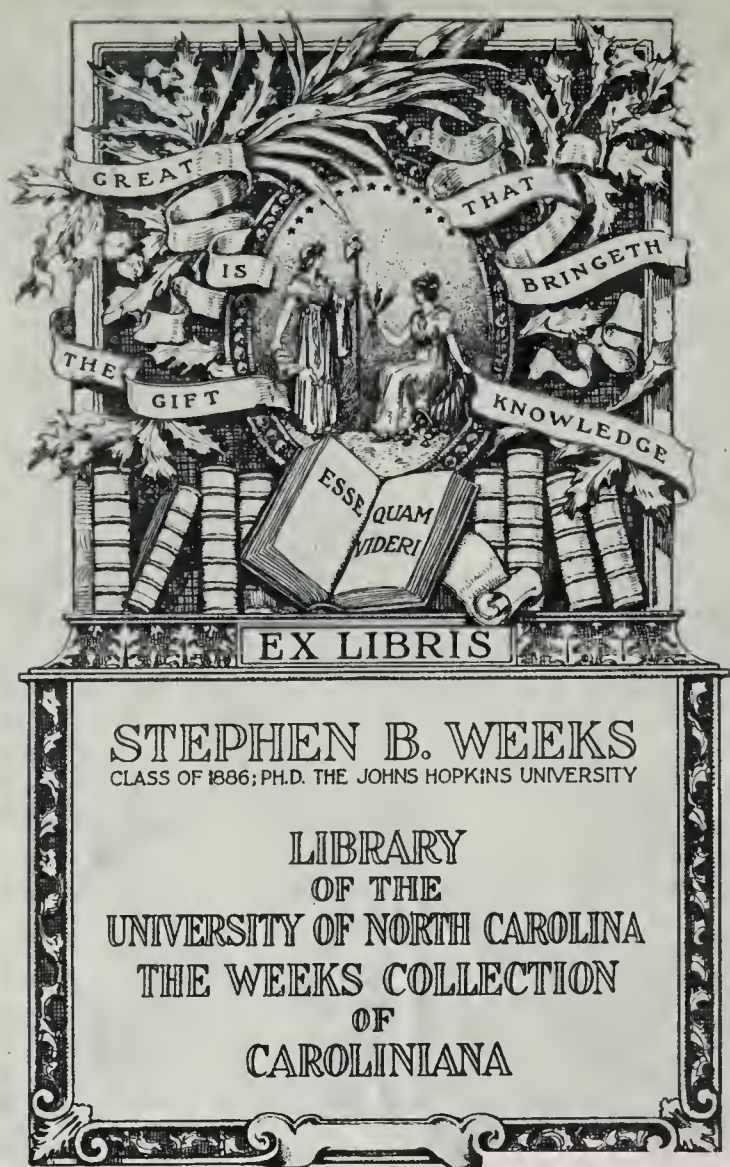


C326  
P63  
cop2

Address

Pike





UNIVERSITY OF N.C. AT CHAPEL HILL



00037547100

Cp32.6-P63

c.2

FOR USE ONLY IN  
THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLECTION

C

THIS TITLE HAS BEEN MICROFILMED



ADDRESS

AT THE CELEBRATION OF

EMANCIPATION DAY,

DELIVERED BY

COL. H. L. PIKE,

AT

RALEIGH, N. C., JANUARY, 1870.



RALEIGH:

STANDARD STEAM BOOK AND JOB PRINT.

1870.





# ADDRESS.

---

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS :

We meet here to-day to celebrate one of the grandest acts the world has ever witnessed, for we celebrate a day whose sun rose on a race of slaves, but whose parting beams shone on the same men—slaves no more—but free men forever. This day will ever rank in history as one of the great landmarks of the world's progress, for it was the death blow to human slavery.

Why, my friends, should I recall the days of slavery? Why should I talk of the war which gave you your liberties? Are not the scenes of the past too fresh in your memories to need recalling? Yes. Far better then to let the dead past bury its dead, and for us of the present to talk of the present, and of those things which will do most to bring us good in the future. Yet, before we draw the curtain over the past, let us do honor to the memory of that great and good man to whom much, very much, of the happiness of this day is due—to ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

His name will ever be the one most dear to the colored men of America, for to him more than to any other man they owe their freedom. It was his brain which conceived the emancipation proclamation; his strong will that brought others to see its beneficence and wisdom; his hand which signed the paper which struck from the slave his shackles and caused him to stand before the world free and unfettered—a man among men. Who does not remember the thrill that quivered from nation to nation when it was announced to the world that slavery was dead forever in America? Who of you, my friends, does not remember with what a mingled feeling of

doubt and happiness you heard that "Abe" Lincoln had set all the negroes free?"

And as the tide of war rolled on with its varying fortunes, but ever onward march, who of you does not remember that he knew that it meant freedom to the black man?

And when the close of the war came—when the shattered army of Lee surrendered to the serried legions of Grant—when the last army of the Confederacy was surrendered by Johnson to Sherman—there was not a colored man in all the South who did not shout with joy, for the death of the Confederacy secured his freedom. Then the day, whose seventh return we now celebrate became the dearest day of all the year to every colored man, for it was the day which made him a freeman. And now, as they will for all time to come upon the recurrence of this day, the colored men meet to celebrate the proclamation which released them from a cruel and unjust bondage, and made them free citizens of a free country. And upon this day the name of Abraham Lincoln will be blessed by every colored man, for he lived the champion of their rights. His memory will be held sacred in their hearts, for he died a martyr to love of his country and his fellow-men.

But, fellow-citizens, the events of the past have imposed upon you many and grave responsibilities. They have elevated you from the low position which unjust laws and the prejudices of ignorant or blinded men caused you to so long occupy. They have put upon you the grave responsibilities which rest upon every American citizen. You are now a part of the American people, enjoying all the rights and privileges enjoyed by any citizen of any State. To properly exercise the rights pertaining to citizenship is no easy task, for according to the manner in which they are exercised depends the welfare of the State and nation. If the citizens act rightly, with discretion, with a desire to do all in their power for the good of the State and the nation, then will both prosper, and every citizen reap his share of the common good. But if the rancor of political strife blinds the people to the claims of justice and



to the voice of prudence, then will their acts be injurious to the State and nation, both will suffer, and the result will be misery to the people.

In these times when the bitter feelings engendered by four long years of civil war have not yet had time to subside, and when the spirit of party is too apt to blind men's eyes to the result of political action, I do not deem it inappropriate for me to allude to the duty of the colored people in their new capacity as citizens. But in all that I may have to say upon this point, I wish it distinctly understood that I do not speak as a party man, nor do I address you, my friends, as party men. I speak simply as a citizen addressing his fellow-citizens, and without one shade of party feeling prompting anything I may say. I speak to you as men whom a cruel system has kept from the blessings of education, has deprived of the means of attaining scholastic or political information, and as men who are eager to know what you shall do for the elevation of your race and the consequent benefit of your country. You have but recently emerged from a condition of bondage, and have been suddenly put into the possession of all the rights of American citizens. You are anxious to know in what manner you can use those rights to the greatest good of your State and nation. You are anxious to learn in what manner you can do most for the elevation of your race, that you may prove to the world that the color of the skin does not alter the qualities of the brain or heart. In short, you are anxious to hear anything that may aid you in your progress as men—as citizens. It is of these things that I wish to speak to you, and I think no time, no day, so appropriate for so doing as this, for seven short years ago to-day you received from the President and people of the United States the right to call yourselves American citizens.

Then to-day I speak to you of the things which you wish to hear; I, who did all in my power to aid you to obtain your rights; I, who have been with you in the great work which has secured to the colored people of North Carolina, of the



South, the position which they now occupy. And I stand before you to-day and say, Friends, hear my words, for they come from one who has earned with his blood the right to speak them.

Then, the first thing to which I wish to direct your attention is the subject of education. Upon this, more than all else, does the welfare of the colored people depend. The people who are best educated are the most prosperous and the most happy. They are also the most influential, because they are able to do the right things at the right times. They are less apt to be deceived by demagogues and by unscrupulous politicians, for they can read and judge for themselves concerning the issues of the day. Look at the colored people in our own State. How many of them have a commonly good education? Not one in ten thousand, and the consequence is that the colored people are unable to obtain positions where good pay rewards intelligence and capability, but are obliged to confine themselves almost entirely to such work as requires only manual skill. The first and greatest aim of the colored people should be to obtain school privileges for their race. To this end they should see that school houses are erected in every election precinct, that colored children, and even colored men, may acquire an education which will fit them to better perform their duties as citizens, and greatly add to their chances for prosperity as men who are compelled to work for a living. The better educated a man is the greater are his capabilities as a citizen, and the better his chances for political preferment. Your education will do everything to elevate the condition of your race and to put it in a position to compel the respect and attention of the world. By becoming educated men you will become qualified to perform all the duties of citizenship and to intelligently discharge the duties of any office to which you may be elected by your fellow citizens. With education will come refinement and appreciation of those moral qualities which make society better and higher. Then will intellect and moral worth assert itself, and then will the wheat be separated



from the chaff. Then will the demarcation lines of society begin to be drawn among you as they are now drawn among your white fellow citizens. Then every colored man will have the chance to fix his own worldly position, as has now every white man. This you cannot now do because of that ignorance, which is common to you all, and which enfolds all so closely that the light of genius is hidden, and the brightest mind can scarcely elevate itself above the common level. This ignorance is not the fault of the colored man, and therefore no white man has a right to deride the colored man for want of education, or for the mistakes which may arise from that want, for the ignorance of the black man was *forced* upon him by the white man, and all possible means were used to prevent him from ridding himself of it, and the most stringent laws were enacted to prevent him from learning to read, even his Bible. From these facts the colored men have no reason to be ashamed of their present ignorance for it results from no fault of their own. But now those unjust laws are no longer in force, and the colored man has the same educational privileges as has the white man. Now if you do not educate yourselves and children the blame is yours. You are now a part of the body politic and have the same rights as other citizens. You are entitled to your proportionate number of schools, and it is the duty of every colored man to see that the rights of his people are accorded to them.

The following statistics concerning the number of colored schools in the South will be interesting to you all :

The whole number of colored schools of every description in the South is 5,454, with 9,503 teachers and 256,353 scholars. Of these 3,314 schools are regularly reported, with 204,253 scholars, of which 192,227 were slaves. The colored people sustain wholly, or in part, 1,581 ; own 759 buildings themselves, and are furnished 772 buildings by the Bureau. In the last year Virginia has gained 50 schools ; North Carolina 83 schools, with 3,209 pupils ; Georgia 105 schools, with 4,527 pupils ; Mississippi 67 schools, with 2,973 pupils, and Tennessee 95



schools, with 4,343 pupils. The other Southern States show increase, but not so much.

From this it will be seen that while North Carolina is ahead of many Southern States she is behind others. This should not be, for in no State of the Union are the colored people more intelligent, more industrious, or better citizens in North Carolina. Therefore it is not too much to assume that the colored people of North Carolina should have more schools than many other States whose colored population is even larger than our own. In this the colored people should be assisted by their white friends, and no man should receive the support of colored men who is not a friend of universal education, and who will not do all in his power to secure a good free school system to our State. This system is now most needed by all. Hitherto only the children of the rich have been able to obtain an education. For them Colleges, Universities and Seminaries have been open, but the poor man was unable to send his children to schools so expensive. Thus it is that so very many poor men are totally without education, or, at best, can only read or write just enough to be able to transact the most common business.

The common school system will do away with the ignorance which now oppresses all classes of laboring men, both white and colored. To the colored men, especially, will they prove of benefit, because they will enable him to enter into pursuits which before have been closed against him on account of his color, and from which he is now barred only by want of education. Let him possess that education so necessary to success in almost every business of life and at once a broad field is opened to him in which the different gifts of mind or taste can determine his choice of occupation. This done, the social prosperity of the colored race is incalculably advanced and intelligence, sterling worth and business capacity will melt away the prejudice of color, and give to the colored man the chance to fix his own position in the world. Knowing these things then, should you not, my friends, do all in your power



to secure the advantages of education? Should you not be willing to make many sacrifices in the present to obtain the great advantages which they will return you in the future? Then never forget that the educational interests of the State are dearer to you than all others, and see that you are not deprived of them. Build up the school houses, and every school will be a round in the ladder which will enable you to reach that plain of intelligence now occupied by the rest of the citizens of your nation. Then will you have performed a great part of the work of convincing a prejudiced world of your fitness to enjoy and wisely use the rights and privileges which seven years ago were bestowed upon you, and the anniversary of whose bestowal we are celebrating to-day.

And now a few words more and I shall be done. Without at all indicating any political preference, I wish to impress upon the colored men of North Carolina the necessity for unity in all things. The prejudices of one hundred and fifty years cannot be done away with in five years, and there are thousands of white men who view the freedom of the colored men with anger and hatred. They cannot be made to believe that it is right for the black man to enjoy the same rights as the white man. They believe in the old slaveholders dogma—of “a white man’s government,” and are filled with bitterness when they see their former slaves in the enjoyment of freedom and exercising the rights of citizenship. There are many men who would do all in their power to deprive the colored man of the right of suffrage and to take away all the privileges he now enjoys. There are other men who, forgetful of all but their own selfish interests, would use the colored people to elevate themselves, and that object obtained, forget the men to whom they owed their prosperity. In view of these circumstances, it behooves the colored people of this State to act with wisdom. Above all things, let them preserve their unity, and always act together with an eye to the advancement of their race and the preservation of the rights they already enjoy. If there are differences of opinion among you upon any important sub-



ject, political or otherwise, do not divide your strength and allow your enemies to beat you in detail, where they would fail if you were united. Consult among yourselves. Determine what policy you will pursue, what men and measures you will support, and then let that policy and those men and measures be supported by every colored man who has the welfare of his race at heart. You are independent citizens, and are qualified to decide for yourselves what things you like best, and should, therefore, never allow yourselves to be driven or led by any man, white or black, into measures you do not like. Think for yourselves, act for yourselves, and let the will of the majority rule. Never trust too much to any one man, be he white or black, for men so trusted are apt to think that they rule and command the people who trust them, and men who so think are always neglectful of the interests of their friends and supporters. Trust a man just so long as you believe that he is true to you and your interests, *and not a minute longer*. Once you have reason to suspect that a man you have trusted has proved unfaithful to you, throw him aside, for you have reason to fear that he will injure you and your cause. The acts of men, not their words, are the true tests of their good faith. If you trust a man and he does nothing for you in return, and shows no interest in your welfare, then you have trusted a bad, a selfish, an ungrateful man, and should trust him no more. If you trust a man and he does as much or more for you than he does for himself, he is just the man you want, and one that you should be proud of possessing. In these troubled times these things are most important to you, and therefore I speak of them.

And now, my friends and fellow-citizens, I have said all that I think I should say, for I do not wish to longer engage your attention, when there are so many distinguished gentlemen waiting to address you. The honor you have done me in selecting me to address you, I fully appreciate, and I thank you for it. Whatever will tend to the good of the colored people of North Carolina, will ever command my warmest sympathies and my best services, and I hope to live to see that day when throughout the length and breadth of this great land there will be a great, a prosperous and a united people, and when there shall be no American citizen slighted because of race or color.











Photomount  
Pamphlet  
Binder  
Gaylord Bros.  
Makers  
Syracuse, N. Y.  
PAT. JAN 21, 1908



